# THE OLD WIVES' TALE;

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# The old wives' tale;

George Peele

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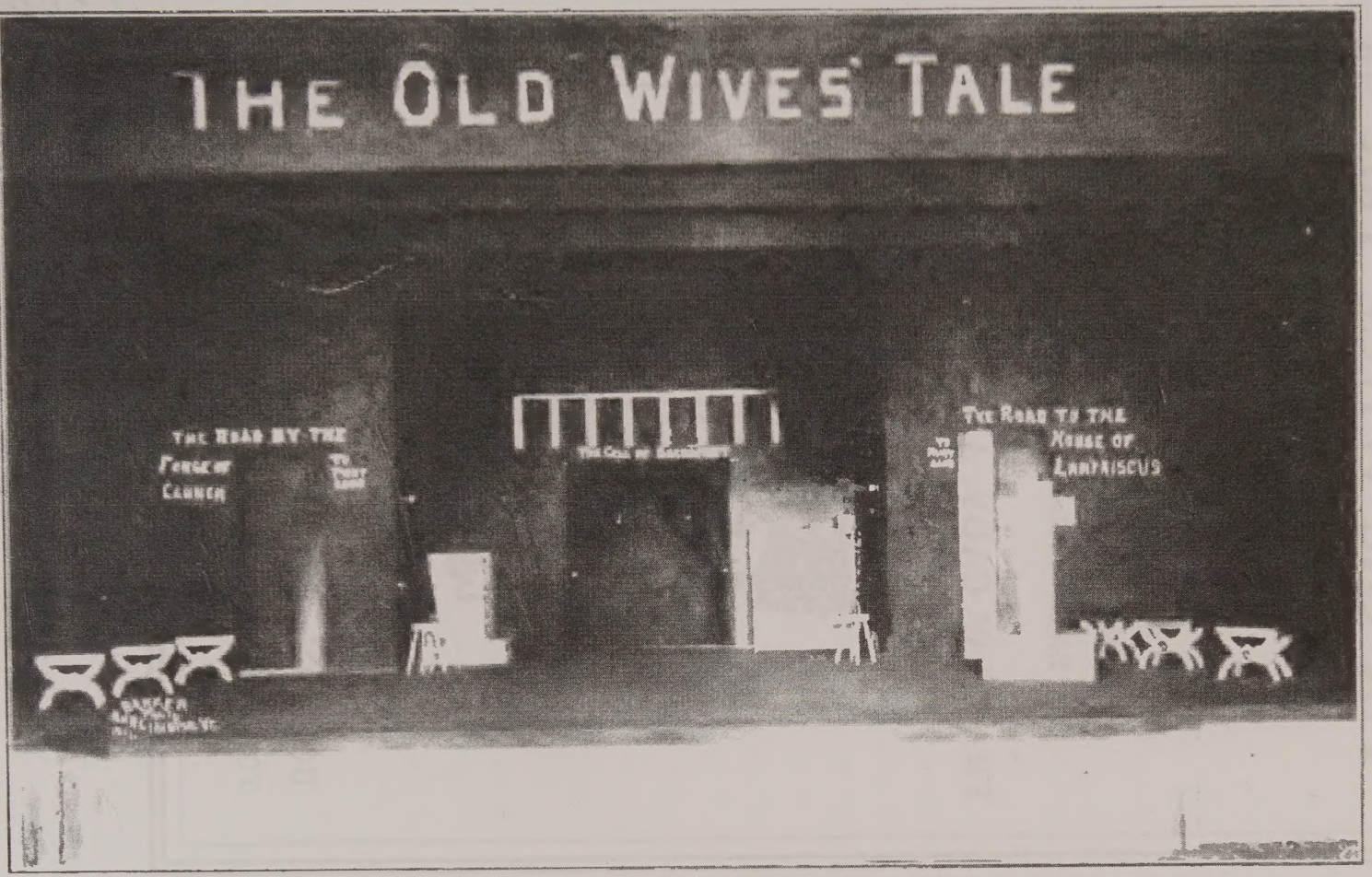


The Continuous Setting of the Play

# The Old Wives' Tale

*A Play*

BY

GEORGE PEELE

As presented at Middlebury College in 1911

Edited with Notes and an Introduction

BY

FRANK W. CADY, A.M., B.LITT. (Oxon)

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# INTRODUCTION

Of the plays of George Peele, *The Old Wives' Tale* was long in least repute. Critics looked at it askance because they failed to realize its purpose, and so felt it to be a jumble of all sorts of things of little virtue and less interest. The critic is at home with the conventional, and this play is in some respects unconventional. It was not to be subjected to the usual standards of judgment, and so the critic passed it over, after expressing mild surprise that Milton should have honored so feeble a thing by making it the source of the story told in *Comus*. And yet the chief devices used in constructing the *Tale* are strikingly conventional; it is only in sources and purpose that Peele shows his originality.

The thing which distinguishes Elizabethan drama from other dramatic types is the control of the story by the characters. In classic drama once the story is decided upon the characters and their places in it are fixed. Not so in Elizabethan. It had, strictly speaking, no story unity. The major story of the plot was hardly more than a starting point in getting together a group of characters typical in a general way of the society of the times and forming the center of unity around which action, spec-

tacle, and dialogue were grouped. Of uch a play the *Merchant of Venice* is a typical example. The major story is the story of Portia and Bassanio. To it naturally is added Antonio's experience with Shylock. But Shylock has a daughter and she a lover, and Tubal is Shylock's closest friend, and Portia has other suitors besides Bassanio, and Launcelot Gobbo has some uncertainty whom he shall serve. So it goes, here a little and there a little added to the original story, until at the end we have before us a group of people varied and yet homogeneous, each with his own life story interwoven inextricably with those of the others. The unity, however, is found in the homogeneous group of characters and not in the diverse stories of their lives. It is in the characters, also, that the realism of *The Merchant of Venice* shows itself. They it is that give the atmosphere of plausibility to a most improbable series of events. Stage tradition, inherited from medieval times, took no thought of temporal or spatial perspective. The people in *The Merchant of Venice* are English men and women transported to Venice for the story's sake. The story is extravagant and absurd. It is accepted without question because the people whose it is are real and intensely alive. The great secret of Shakespeare's skill in character portrayal was his genius; but the traditional habit of his theater to make characters English and realistic and to subordinate story to the presentation of a homoge-

neous social group gave him his magnificent opportunity. He came in the fullness of time.

It is true, however, that by the time Shakespeare wrote his comedies there was ready for him a story formula which had been found especially effective in the presentation of this homogeneous character group. To it he added, certainly, but he did not alter it materially, because his interest was primarily in the group of characters and the story was scarcely more than a vehicle of expression. In following this formula he made up his plot from two or three stories. There was a story dealing with people of the better class. As was normal in his day it was from the point of view of these people that the social group was handled. Beside this ran another story about characters whose social rank was low, tradesmen, or servants, or social outcasts The chief story was always borrowed. The minor story might be borrowed or original. But it always seems to grow out of an attempt to give social orientation to the people in the main story through an enlargement of the background of their life by an original treatment of the minor characters in the story. Often by the sheer force of its originality and consequent realism it usurped the interest of the main story and ran away with the play. However that might be, the action of these stories was always skillfully interrelated by the use of character or situation in precisely the same way that the life stories of any homogeneous

group of men and women would be related. Often, indeed, Shakespeare invented a third story, or group of episodes, to bind the other two together, as in *Midsummer-night's Dream,* where the fairies are so used, or the Jessica-Lorenzo episodes in *The Merchant of Venice,* or Dogberry and the Watch in *Much Ado.* But the total effect was to give the impression of a cross-section of Elizabethan society, each group intent upon its own purposes, but in accomplishing them plausibly assisting the purposes of the other groups. The unity lay not in the story, but in the homogeneity of the group of characters. This is not the place to discuss further Shakespeare's artistic skill in presenting this homogeneous group. The point here to be made is that Peele, with a skill not equaling Shakespeare's, is using the same formula. It is in this respect that the play is a forerunner of greater things.

The play is a fairy story. In order to get his audience into the mood he desires, Peele makes use of that perfectly conventional Elizabethan device, the induction. In it Madge begins to tell the fairy tale, when the actors themselves break in upon the scene and the action is at once under way, like a dream come true. Madge in the induction and throughout the play performs a necessary and important service in making Peele's purpose plain and in keeping it before the audience; but at the start she is well content to see others enact her story for her. When it is well under way it is

seen to consist of at least two stories. Each of these centers about a double quest. In the main story two brothers are searching for their sister who has been spirited away by a sorcerer. The other part of the double-quest in this main story is taken up by a lover of the sister who comes seeking her. In the minor story two crude fellows aping the chivalry of their betters enter upon a quest for one whom we are allowed to believe is the same young woman; but they are satisfied each with one of the two daughters of Lampriscus, a villager, whose quest for husbands for his daughters is the second part of the minor story. All of these quests are bound together by the presence in the plot of the story of Erestus, who is the prophet of good, and foretells to each seeker what he may hope from his quest. Erestus himself is under the power of the sorcerer in the play who has stolen his lady and driven her mad. Here we have the story of those in higher walks of life and that of those in the lower interrelated in many ways and bound together by a third story acting as a cement between the other two. In this respect it does not differ from the practice of Shakespeare himself.

Peele is, however, much more skillful in his use of the induction than in his use of the formula for romantic comedy. In fact, without the induction the story would hardly hang together, because the group of characters does not have quite the homogeneity Shakespeare succeeded in imparting to his

groups, and without which it is difficult to give a romantic comedy the impression of unity. And yet the matter of the story is but a fairy tale, and Madge so successfully introduced its outline into her induction that she has given it an impression of unity it otherwise would not have.

It is perfectly true, one must confess, that these two major conventionalities would of themselves give *The Old Wives' Tale* no more than a historic interest were it not for two matters in which Peele showed more originality. In the first place, his choice of sources for the situations in the play was entirely original. Instead of turning to the conventional sources in the romantic literature and drama of the time, Peele went to the fairy lore of his own land, the romance of the folk, and put into his play the versions of familiar tales which he had himself without doubt heard in childhood. In the second place, by the use he makes of the induction, he not only emphasizes in the minds of the audience the sources of the play, but reminds them that the outlook upon life which he wishes them to take in viewing it is not that of the court and its sophistication, but that of people like Madge and her companions. Not alone original in his sources, he was also original in the point of view from which he got his outlook upon life in the play.

Bound up in the conventional formula for romantic comedy as used by Shakespeare there was the conventional point of view characteristic of the

times. Society did not center, as it does to-day, in the ubiquitous working-man. Elizabethan society existed for the upper classes For this reason the audience was asked by the playwright of the time to identify itself in sympathetic point of view with the characters who take part in the central romantic story of the play. In *Midsummer-night's Dream*, for instance, we see everything from the viewpoint of the lovers and their set. That the crew of Bottom are thus seen is evident from the last act. Bottom is funny to the spectators, but to himself he is profoundly serious. How definitely the point of view of the play is that of the upper classes is apparent when one attempts to imagine the events from Bottom's viewpoint. A play viewing life from that angle would, it might be said, be possible only in this modern day. These plays were written at a time when society had not become self-conscious and before sociology had cast its sombre shadow across men's lives.

So it is that Peele dared to do the unconventional and original thing when he asked his audience to identify itself for this play with Madge and her companions and not with the lost maiden and those in quest of her; to sit, that is, once more around the fireplace as they had done in their far-distant childhood, and see again through the narrative of an old and withered crone, as once they had, the romances of fairy-land unfolded before them. In its final effect Peele has asked us to look

again at the world from the point of view of the child, as Barrie has done for this age in Peter Pan. And in making this request he has revealed his purpose in the play. The spectator's mind is immediately divided against itself. The judgment of the child in him is made severely critical of the sophistication of the adult and, in this way, a double criticism of contrast is, as it were, set into action concerning the matters treated within the play. Peele makes of his fairy stories a dramatic criticism of the romantic chivalry of the day. By establishing this original viewpoint of his in the minds of the spectators he makes this criticism two-edged. Not alone are the characters of the minor plot in their exaggeration a satire upon the romantic chivalry soberly treated in the main plot. That main plot itself exhibits a chivalry exaggerated and yet in many subtle ways debased by Madge's plebeian imagination. The chivalry of courtiers must have undergone a marked change in spirit and in deeds when seen from the point of view of the child who is listening to a story told by a woman like her. To set up this viewpoint is just what Peele successfully attempts in this play. This is what was meant by Professor Gummere when he said: "He (Peele) was the first to blend romantic drama with a realism which turns romance back upon itself, and produces the comedy of subconscious humor." For we are constantly comparing the point of view which Peele brings to the fore-

ground by his realistic appeal to us to be children once more, with the usual point of view subconsciously asserting itself as we see the play or read it.

The same point of view is carefully maintained in the presentation of the characters. That these are conventional types is at once apparent. But they are seen very largely through the eyes of Madge. There is a colourless regularity about the people in the major story which reflects her opinion of them as proper in their place, but uninteresting. Huanebango, of course, is a modification of the conventional braggart soldier; but in the eyes of Madge he is the only genuine and lively exponent of true chivalry. The rustics become invested with a more sympathetic interest because she is one of them; and Erestus, the spirit of good within the play, is the only one of the characters from the upper classes who has her undivided sympathy and respect.

To a modern audience, it is true, both the society of that day and the stage practice have become traditional and even obsolete. The plays of that time have become nothing but archaisms of only historical interest unless they happen to present some matter of present human interest. Shakespeare is perennial, for instance, in two respects, his poetry and his characterization. His stage practice has become obsolete; his point of view toward society has perished with the society that gave it birth; but his people live to us in spite of this, and

his poetry speaks to the heart of man in every age. The question in regard to *The Old Wives' Tale* is, What is there in the play of present human interest which makes worth while a modern presentation? It probably does not lie in poetry or characterization. It lies, rather, in the very things in which Peele showed his originality: the perennial child-interest in fairy-tale to which he appealed in his choice of sources, and the perennial interest to an adult in returning to look upon life through the eyes of a child. The fast flocking memories of childhood carried the story in Peele's day and interpreted its humor and satire as he wished it to be interpreted. So they do to-day, in spite of obsolete stage conventions and social forms. In appealing to the perennial interest in fairy stories, Peele was assuring to himself an interested audience as long as the old tales continued to be the property of the children of the race.

Upon looking at the matter from this point of view, it becomes evident at once that in any modern presentation of the play the fairy element is the one which needs to be emphasized. The producer has before him in the large three possibilities: to reproduce, as far as possible, the Elizabethan stage and setting, to make an out-door presentation; or to set the play upon a modern picture stage with all the scenic accessories that are to-day available. If the present text is based upon the first of the three possibilities, it is not because the producers failed

to see how effective the other methods of presentation might be made, but because to them at that time the first seemed the most feasible.

No large liberties were taken with the text aside from the shifting of one scene. A fairy dance accompanied by song was made the prologue to the play. Again within the induction the fairies danced when the song "When as the rye" was sung; and at the end a final fairy dance preceded the epilogue, which was a modern addition to the play. Perhaps the most questionable innovation was found in having "The Mad Maid's Song," by Robert Herrick, sung while Venelia was upon the stage. In addition to these things, fairies were made to open and shut the curtains, place and remove properties, and perform other incidental functions tending to keep their activities in mind. The details of these devices are revealed in the text, in which every change from the original form is carefully indicated.

A word should, perhaps, be said about the stage. Its construction is an easy matter, requiring a very moderate outlay. The only essentials are an open front stage and a back stage, before which a curtain is hung. There should be two entrances to the open front stage, one on either side of the curtain hung before the back stage. The entrances to the back stage can be arranged to suit the convenience of the play which is to be given. For instance, it was found that the fireplace made an effective entrance and exit for the characters in Madge's in-

terrupted tale. Properties are few and solid. They may be disposed to suit the conception of the setting which is being worked out by the producers. The modified stage used at the production of which this edition is the outcome is shown in the frontispiece. It is much more elaborate than is needed, much larger in many ways; though it is far more simple than would be any setting of the play upon a modern stage. Its general form was taken from a cut of the ground plan of the Blackfriar's drawn by Professor C. F. Wallace for an article in the *Century* for September, 1910. But the arrangement of properties and of exits and entrances, other than the two exposed to the audience, was entirely to suit the convenience of this production.

The conception of the stage held by Elizabethan playwrights was in essence very simple. They were accustomed to think of the broad open front stage as anywhere, suiting the scene to be represented. Sometimes it took its locality from settings exposed upon the back stage when the curtain was withdrawn. When the curtain was closed it was generally simply an open place. The space behind the curtain, the back stage, was always a definite locality, though that might change as the scenes changed. With this in mind, it was necessary to place the house of Clunch, the magic well, and the cell of Sacrapant behind the curtain. The cross where three roads met and the mound of earth with the magic glass would as necessarily be on the open

stage. At the beginning of the play the open stage is a wood into which the three vagabonds enter, and after Madge is interrupted in her story, that same open stage becomes the fairy-land where all these strange wonders happen. The details are presented in the stage directions In the manner thus briefly indicated was effected the first essential detail in presenting Peele's point of view, an adequate stage setting.

And yet, although the simplicity of the Elizabethan stage has its charm, it also has its limitations. *The Old Wives' Tale* is a true out-doors play. It calls for the witchery of moonlight to help make its improbabilities seem probable. This the bare stage could not give nor does the poetry of the play help in the least to bring the illusion of Fairyland as does that of *The Midsummer-night's Dream.* Next best would be a modern setting in which the art of the stage manager could most effectively supplement the art of the poet. But, after all, if the note that is timeless in the play, the note of Fairyland, the note of father and mother looking again at life through the eyes of their children—if that note is caught and held throughout, even the strangeness of the antique stage, in its novelty and intimacy with the audience, adds to the interest and in some subtle manner increases the beauty of the presentation. Nor do the changes in the play appear as anachronisms so long as they are in harmony with this central

touch of perennial interest. Robert Herrick may have written after Peele's play was forgotten; but his note was the note struck by that part of the play in which his song is used; and it would be far from the thought of any Elizabethan to deny the right to any one to borrow where he could to enhance the dramatic value of his play. They stood not upon the order of their stealing, but stole at once, where it was a question of the play's success.

These are the matters of importance in connection with adapting the play to a modern audience. A word may not be amiss about the various characters. The most difficult acting parts are those of the onlookers, Madge and her companions, and yet upon them very largely rests the business of holding the audience to Peele's point of view. The stage directions have been made to indicate their business in a general way; but detail must of necessity be left to individual initiative. The characters of the main story are rather colourless, but call for careful work in the presentation. Erestus is especially effective. Huanebango and Corebus, with their ladies, beggar description in any adequate presentation; the low comedy possibilities of the four are almost limitless. Jack and Sacrapant are foils to each other in dignity and frolicsomeness. It is not intended, so it seems, that the ghost of Jack shall be presented as invisible. He is simply unseen by the other actors at the right times.

And so the modern version of the play has grown

out of the old through an attempt to make it certain that the modern audience would catch the fairy spirit which pervades it. The elaborate stage directions, so unlike the antique practice, have been inserted that those who read and see not may possibly get some of that same spirit as they read. *The Old Wives' Tale* is not a great tale, but it is a pleasant one. The deeds it chronicles are not the deeds of every day, but those of a childlike fancy. The people whom it brings to life are creatures of every day seen through the glorifying eyes of those whose minds are simple. It is the perennial comment of childhood upon life that gives the play its charm.

It is impossible and unwise to go into more detail out of personal experience in the presentation of the play Mr. Archibald Henderson has truly suggested that stage and audience, traditions and conventions are but tools in the hands of a playwright of genius, which he uses to create a work of art. But it is true that when once his work of art is created it is in turn the tool of producer and actor through which they present their interpretation of the life it expresses. For this reason there is only one royal rule for success. Make the play your own until it masters you and then build into its production its mastery over your soul. If you are an artist you will not be satisfied until you make people see the play through your eyes. By that your artistic measure must be taken.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SACRAPANT
FIRST BROTHER, *named* CALYPHA
SECOND BROTHER, *named* THELEA
EUMENIDES
ERESTUS
LAMPRISCUS
HUANEBANGO
COREBUS
WIGGEN
CHURCHWARDEN
SEXTON
GHOST OF JACK
DELIA, *sister to* CALYPHA *and* THELEA
VENELIA, *betrothed to* ERESTUS
ZANTIPPA, *daughter to* LAMPRISCUS
CELANTA, *daughter to* LAMPRISCUS
HOSTESS
ANTIC
FROLIC
FANTASTIC
CLUNCH, *a smith*
MADGE, *his wife*
FRIAR
FURIES
EPILOGUE
HARVESTMEN *and* WOMEN, FAIRIES, *etc.*

# OLD WIVES' TALE

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[*The open stage, as of the Blackfriar's Theater in Elizabethan London. Back center a curtain with entrances each side. Right front (as seen by the audience) a cross where three roads are supposed to meet. Left front a mound of earth. To right of cross and left of mound of earth, stools for spectators. Over each entrance, legends: over the left,* The Road by the Forge of Clunch, *over the right,* The Road to the House of Lampriscus; *by each,* To Fairyland.

*Off stage are heard voices singing a song,* The Fairy Ring, *and from either entrance burst in fairies coming to dance upon the green. They are clad in all the hues of spring and ripple with gladness as they dance. At the end they go out as they came in.*

*Enter, left,* Antic, Fantastic, *and* Frolic, *three knights of the weary way in tattered raiment;* Frolic, *weary and footsore;* Fantastic, *steeped in melancholy and shivering between fear and cold;* Antic, *famished, and hindered in utterance by a stammering tongue. They have lost their way in the forest and are in abject fear.*] [1]

[1] Throughout, the presence of brackets indicates matter inserted in the present text.

ANT. How now, fellow Frolic! what, all[1] amort? doth this sadness become thy madness? What though we have lost our way in the woods? yet never hang the head as though thou hadst no hope to live till to-morrow; for Fantastic and I will warrant thy life to-night for twenty in the hundred.

FRO. Antic, and Fantastic, as I am frolic franion,[2] never in all my life was I so dead slain. What, to lose our way in the wood, without either fire or candle, so uncomfortable? *O coelum! O terra! O maria!* O Neptune!

FAN. Why makes thou it so strange, seeing Cupid hath led our young master to the fair lady, and she is the only saint that he hath sworn to serve?

FRO. What resteth, then, but we commit him to his saint, and each of us take his stand up in a tree, and sing out our ill fortune to the tune of "O man in desperation"?

ANT. Desperately spoken, fellow Frolic, in the dark: but seeing it falls out thus, let us rehearse the old proverb:

"Three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men be we;
I in the wood, and thou on the ground,
And Jack sleeps in the tree."

[*A dog barks without.*]

[1] Dejected.
[2] A gay, carefree fellow.

FAN. Hush! a dog in the wood, or a wooden[1] dog! O comfortable hearing! I had even as lief the chamberlain of the White Horse had called me up to bed.

FRO. Either hath this trotting cur gone out of his circuit, or else are we near some village, which should not be far off, for I perceive the glimmering of a glow-worm, a candle, or a cat's eye, my life for a halfpenny!

[*Enter, left,* Clunch, *the aged smith, returning weary from his day's work, with lantern in his hand. He limps slightly with the years and wears the leathern apron of his trade. Not too cordial a man is this weary smith, though he still knows the uses of hospitality.*]

In the name of my own father, be thou ox or ass that appearest, tell us what thou art.

CLUNCH. What am I! why, I am Clunch, the smith. What are you? what make you in my territories at this time of the night?

ANT. What do we make, dost thou ask? why, we make faces for fear.

FRO. And, in faith, sir, unless your hospitality do relieve us, we are like to wander, with a sorrowful heigh-ho, among the owlets and hobgoblins of the forest. Good Vulcan, for Cupid's sake that hath cozened us all, befriend us as thou mayst; and command us howsoever, wheresoever, whensoever, in whatsoever, for ever and ever.

[1] Wooden—mad. Note the pun.

CLUNCH. Well, masters, it seems to me you have lost your way in the wood: in consideration whereof, if you will go with Clunch to his cottage, you shall have house-room and a good fire to sit by, although we have no bedding to put you in.

FAN. O blessed smith.[1]

ANT. O bountiful Clunch![1]

CLUNCH. For your further entertainment, it shall be as it may be, so and so. [*The dog barks within.*] Hark! this is Ball, my dog, that bids you all welcome in his own language: come, take heed for stumbling on the threshold.—Open door, Madge; take in guests.

[*The curtains are opened by two fairies who vanish. On the right is revealed the house of* Clunch *and* Madge, *with cheery fire-place, a comfortable settle, a table set with meager fare, a few stools, etc. On the left is a well, with step and sweep. Center is the* Cell *of* Sacrapant *behind closed curtains. Above is the railing of a balcony.* Madge, *the wife of* Clunch, *is standing center. She is an old, bent woman, but as cheery as the blaze of her own fire, and whole-hearted in welcoming the guests* Clunch *brings.*]

MADGE. Welcome, Clunch, and good fellows all, that come with my good-man: for my good-man's sake, come on, sit down: here is a piece of cheese, and a pudding of my own making.

ANT. Thanks, gammer. [*He begins to eat*

[1] In the original text these are one speech spoken by *All.*

*hastily.*] A good example for the wives of our town.

FRO. Gammer, thou and thy good-man sit lovingly together; we come to chat, and not to eat.

CLUNCH. Well, masters, if you will eat nothing, take away. [Madge *removes food.* Antic *grievously disappointed*] Come, what do we to pass away the time? [*To* Madge.] Lay a crab in the fire to roast for lamb's wool.[1] What, shall we have a game at trump[2] or ruff[2] to drive away the time? How say you?

FAN. This smith leads a life as merry as a king with Madge, his wife. Sirrah Frolic, I am sure thou art not without some [tale][3] or other! no doubt but Clunch can bear his part.

FRO. Else think you me ill brought up: so set to it when you will.

[*Here they are astonished by the music of a song in the distance of which these are the words.*]

SONG

Whenas the rye reach to the chin,
And chopcherry, chopcherry ripe within,
Strawberries swimming in the cream,
And school-boys playing in the stream;
Then, O then, O then, O my true-love said,
Till that time come again
She could not live a maid.

[1] A drink of ale and of crab-apples roasted
[2] Common card games.
[3] "Round" in the original.

[*Enter on either side the fairies again.*]

[FRO. Marry, what are these? I fear me, Clunch, there is some witchery about, or these be fairies come to dance upon the green.]

[*The fairies after a dance go out.*]

ANT. This sport does well [an it were not sorcery]; but methinks, gammer, a merry winter's tale would drive away the time trimly: come, I am sure you are not without a score.

FAN. I'faith, gammer, a tale of an hour long were as good as an hour's sleep.

FRO. Look you, gammer, of the giant and the king's daughter, and I know not what: I have seen the day, when I was a little one, you might have drawn me a mile after you with such a discourse.

MADGE. Well, since you be so importunate, my good-man shall fill the pot and get him to bed. [*As she is speaking* Clunch *goes to the well for water and therewith fills the pot upon the fire.*] They that ply their work must keep good hours: one of you go lie with him; he is a clean-skinned man, I tell you, without either spavin or windgall: so I am content to drive away the time with an old wives' winter's tale.

FAN. No better hay in Devonshire; o' my word, gammer, I'll be one of your audience.

FRO. And I another, that's flat.

ANT. Then must I to bed with the good-man.—*Bona nox,* gammer.—Good night, Frolic.

CLUNCH. Come on, my lad, thou shalt take thy

unnatural rest with me. [*Exit with* Antic.]

FRO. Yet this vantage shall we have of them in the morning, to be ready at the sight thereof extempore.

[Frolic *and* Fantastic *remove the table.* Madge *places her stool near the settle and stirs the fire. As the old wife begins her tale she sits on the settle next* Frolic, *who is by the fire.* Fantastic *is on a stool at her right. All during the story* Frolic, *though interested, affects disdain while* Fantastic *hears it out with pricked-up, eager ears.*]

MADGE. Now this bargain, my masters, must I make with you, that you will say hum and ha to my tale, so shall I know you are awake.

BOTH. Content, gammer, that will we do.—

MADGE. Once upon a time, there was a king, or a lord, or a duke, that had a fair daughter, the fairest that ever was; as white as snow and as red as blood: and once upon a time his daughter was stolen away: and he sent all his men to seek out his daughter; and he sent so long, that he sent all his men out of his land.

FRO. Who drest his dinner, then?

MADGE. Nay, either hear my tale, or turn tail.

FAN. Well said! on with your tale, gammer.

MADGE. O Lord, I quite forgot! there was a conjurer, and this conjurer could do anything, and he turned himself into a great dragon, and carried the king's daughter away in his mouth to a castle that he made of stone; and there he kept her I

know not how long, till at last all the king's men went out so long that her two brothers went to seek her. O, I forget! she (he, I would say) turned a proper young man to a bear in the night, and a man in the day, and keeps by a cross that parts three several ways; and he made his lady run mad,—Ods me bones, who comes here?

[*Enter, fireplace, the two brothers. Two in one, or one in two, are these who venture after their sister into this maze of sorcery. As proper young gentlemen as one would see in summer's day, but simple-minded and somewhat colorless withal, yet well suited and with weapons at their sides. As they enter the three about the fire are seen to nod their understanding of the tale.*]

FRO. Soft, gammer, here some come to tell your tale for you.

FAN. Let them alone; let us hear what they will say.[1]

FIRST BRO Upon these chalky cliffs of Albion
We are arrivéd now with tedious toil;
And compassing the wide world round about,
To seek our sister, to seek fair Delia forth,
Yet cannot we so much as hear of her.

[*Enter, fireplace,* Erestus, *to the cross, unseen by the two brothers, an old man, half wizard and half friar, in gown of grey with rosary and crucifix. He walks head down and counts his beads and begs an alms, while* Madge *points him out to her com-*

[1] This closes the induction.

*panions; and yet he is the power for good within the play, who puts to naught the plans of sorcery. Fittingly he stands by the cross where meet three ways to warn the passers-by against the sorcerer.*]

SECOND BRO. O fortune cruel, cruel and unkind!
Unkind in that we cannot find our sister,
Our sister, hapless in her cruel chance.—

[*He sees* Erestus.]

Soft! who have we here?

FIRST BRO. Now, father, God be your speed! what do you gather there?

EREST. Hips and haws, and sticks and straws, and things that I gather on the ground, my son.

FIRST BRO. Hips and haws, and sticks and straws! why, is that all your food, father?

EREST. Yea, son.

SECOND BRO. Father, here is an alms-penny for me; and if I speed in that I go for, I will give thee as good a gown of grey as ever thou didst wear.

FIRST BRO. And, father, here is another alms-penny for me; and if I speed in my journey, I will give thee a palmer's staff of ivory, and a scallop-shell of beaten gold.

EREST. Was she fair?

SECOND BRO. Ay, the fairest for white, and the purest for red, as the blood of the deer, or the driven snow.

EREST. Then hark well, and mark well, my old spell:
Be not afraid of every stranger;

[Frolic *crosses himself, the others show fear.*]
Start not aside at every danger;
Things that seem are not the same;
Blow a blast at every flame;
For when one flame of fire goes out,
Then come your wishes well about:
If any ask who told you this good,
Say, the white bear of England's wood.

FIRST BRO. Brother, heard you not what the old man said?
Be not afraid of every stranger;
Start not aside for every danger;
Things that seem are not the same;
Blow a blast at every flame;
For when one flame of fire goes out,
Then come your wishes well about;
If any ask who told you this good,
Say, the white bear of England's wood.

SECOND BRO. Well, if this do us any good,
Well fare the white bear of England's wood!

[*The* two brothers *go out by the magic well,* second brother *repeating first two lines of the spell.*]

EREST. Now sit thee here, and tell a heavy tale.
Sad in thy mood, and sober in thy cheer.
Here sit thee now, and to thyself relate
The hard mishap of thy most wretched state.

[Madge *and her* companions *again nod their understanding and* Madge *prepares to knit, since others are telling her story for her.*]
In Thessaly I lived in sweet content,

Until that fortune wrought my overthrow,
For there I wedded was unto a dame,
That lived in honor, virtue, love, and fame.
But Sacrapant, that curséd sorcerer,
Being besotted with my beauteous love,
My dearest love, my true betrothéd wife,
Did seek the means to rid me of my life.
But worse than this, he with his 'chanting spells
Did turn me straight unto an ugly bear;
And when thē sun doth settle in the west,
Then I begin to don my ugly hide:
And all the day I sit, as now you see,
And speak in riddles, all inspired with rage,
Seeming an old and miserable man,
And yet I am in April of my age.
[But now,][1] Venelia, my betrothéd love,
Runs madding, all enraged, about the woods,
All by his curséd and enchanting spells.—

[*Enter, fireplace,* Venelia, *his lady, mad, searching about for the lover of whom her dim mind holds a fleeting memory, but whom she cannot recognize. The three by the fireplace fear her and as she goes out thereat* Fantastic *explores the chimney with terror-stricken glances.*

*All the while she is upon the stage, the singers heard before are singing the* "Mad Maid's Song" *of Robert Herrick.*]

[Ah,][2] here comes Lampriscus, my discontented

[1] Original, See where.
[2] Original, But.

neighbour.

[*Enter, left,* Lampriscus, *old, leaning on a staff, a beggarly man, querulous from much hen-pecking, the wreck of what might once have been a man. He bears a pot of honey.* Lampriscus *is a fellow-villager with* Clunch *and* Madge, *one only indirectly connected with the fairy story through his daughters, vicariously a fairy as it were. During the* Lampriscus *incident* Madge *knits busily, but attentively,* Fantastic *goes peacefully to sleep, and* Frolic *is enduring somewhat impatiently his aching feet.*]

How now, neighbour! you look towards the ground as well as I: you muse on something.

LAMP. Neighbour, on nothing but on the matter I so often moved to you: if you do anything for charity, help me; if for neighbourhood or brotherhood, help me; never was one so cumbered as is poor Lampriscus; and to begin, I pray receive this pot of honey, to mend your fare.

EREST. Thanks, neighbour, set it down; honey is always welcome to the bear. And now, neighbour, let me hear the cause of your coming.

LAMP. I am, as you know, neighbour, a man unmarried, and lived so unquietly with my two wives, that I keep every year holy the day wherein I buried them both: the first was on Saint Andrew's day, the other on Saint Luke's.

EREST. And now, neighbour, you of this country say, your custom is out. But on with your tale, neighbour.

LAMP. By my first wife, whose tongue wearied me alive, and sounded in my ears like the clapper of a great bell, whose talk was a continual torment to all that dwelt by her or lived nigh her, you have heard me say I had a handsome daughter.

EREST. True, neighbour.

LAMP. She it is that afflicts me with her continual clamours, and hangs on me like a bur: poor she is, and proud she is; as poor as a sheep newshorn, and as proud of her hopes as a peacock of her tail well-grown.

EREST. Well said, Lampriscus, you speak it like an Englishman.

LAMP. As curst as a wasp, and as froward as a child new-weaned; she is to my age, as smoke to the eyes, or as vinegar to the teeth.

EREST. Holily praised, neighbour. As much for the next.

LAMP. By my other wife I had a daughter so hard-favoured, so foul and ill faced, that I think a grove full of golden trees, and the leaves of rubies and diamonds, would not be a dowry answerable to her deformity.

EREST. Well, neighbour, now you have spoke, hear me speak: send them to the well for the water of life; there shall they find their fortunes unlooked for. Neighbour, farewell.

LAMP. Farewell, and a thousand. [Erestus *goes out by the well.*] And now goeth poor Lampriscus to put in execution this excellent counsel.

[*He goes out right.*]

FRO. Why, this goes round without a fiddling-stick: but, do you hear, gammer, was this the man that was a bear in the night and a man in the day?

MADGE. Ay, this is he; and this man that came to him was a beggar, and dwelt upon a green. [*Entrance of* Harvesters *for dance.*] But soft! who come here? O, these are the harvestmen; ten to one they sing a song of mowing.

[*Their song is sung without.*]

All ye that lovely lovers be,
Pray you for me:
Lo, here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,
And sow sweet fruits of love;
In your sweet hearts well may it prove!

[*Enter, fireplace,* Huanebango *violently frightening off the dancers and awakening* Fantastic *with a start. He is dressed in fantastic and highly-colored garb, as one who is complacent about himself, and bears in his hand a great two-handed sword, whose blade, however, in spite of much boasting, has not yet been steeped in gore. It may be there is in this fantastical figure a touch of satire upon knighthood which is past its flower.* Huanebango *is followed by* Corebus, *the booby, arrayed as for a village festival in the proudest of suits. Let those who are hasty to judge this* Corebus *a coward, withhold their opinion. He likes not the point of a two-handed sword when it is thrust at his breast, but he knows the boasting of* Huan *to be the hollowest*

*mockery and shows himself after all a man of judgment in many things, having, indeed, no little learning of his own As* Huan *begins his speech,* Fantastic *and* Frolic *start after* Corebus *and* Huan *in great curiosity, but at sight of his sword return hastily to the settle.*]

HUAN. Now, by Mars and Mercury, Jupiter and Janus, Sol and Saturnus, Venus and Vesta, Pallas and Proserpina, and by the honour of my house, Polimackeroeplacidus, it is a wonder to see what this love will make silly fellows adventure, even in the wane of their wits and infancy of their discretion. Alas, my friend, what fortune calls thee forth to seek thy fortune among brazen gates, enchanted towers, fire and brimstone, thunder and lightning? Her beauty, I tell thee, is peerless, and she precious whom thou affectest. Do off these desires, good countryman: good friend, run away from thyself; and, so soon as thou canst, forget her, whom none must inherit but he that can monsters tame, labours achieve, riddles absolve, loose enchantments, murder magic, and kill conjuring,—and that is the great and mighty Huanebango.

COR. Hark you, sir, hark you. First know I have here the flurting feather, and have given the parish the start for the long stock:[1] now, sir, if it be no more but running through a little lightning and thunder, and "riddle me, riddle me, what's this?" I'll have the wench from the conjurer, if

[1] Long stocking

he were ten conjurers.

FAN. [*Fearfully and with deep interest.*] Gammer, what is he?

MADGE. [*Condescendingly superior. She has never stopped knitting. This is her story and nothing can surprise her.*] O, this is one that is going to the conjurer: let him alone, hear what he says.[1]

HUAN. I have abandoned the court and honourable company, to do my devoir against this sore sorcerer and mighty magician: if this lady be so fair as she is said to be, she is mine, she is mine; *meus, mea, meum, in contemptum omnium grammaticorum.*

COR. *O falsum Latinum!*
The fair maid is *minum,*
*Cum apurtinantibus gibletis* and all.

HUAN. If she be mine, as I assure myself the heavens will do somewhat to reward my worthiness, she shall be allied to none of the meanest gods, but be invested in the most famous stock of Huanebango,—Polimackeroeplacidus, my grandfather, my father, Pergopolineo, my mother, Dionora de Sardinia, famously descended.

COR. Do you hear, sir? had not you a cousin that was called Gusteceridis?

HUAN. Indeed, I had a cousin that sometime followed the court infortunately, and his name Bustegusteceridis. [*Enter, well to cross,* Erestus, *un-*

[1] This speech and the one which precedes were originally before the first speech of Huanebango.

*seen.*]

COR. O Lord, I know him well! he is the knight of the neat's-feet.

HUAN. O, he loved no capon better! he hath oftentimes deceived his boy of his dinner; that was his fault, good Bustegusteceridis.

COR. Come, shall we go along? [*Sees* Erestus.]

Soft! here is an old man at the cross: let us ask him the way thither.—Ho, you gaffer! I pray you tell where the wise man the conjurer dwells.

HUAN. Where that earthly goddess keepeth her abode, the commander of my thoughts, and fair mistress of my heart.

EREST. Fair enough, and far enough from thy fingering, son.

HUAN. I will follow my fortune after mine own fancy, and do according to mine own discretion

EREST. Yet give something to an old man before you go.

HUAN. Father, methinks a piece of this cake might serve your turn

EREST. Yea, son.

HUAN. Huanebango giveth no cakes for alms: ask of them that give gifts for poor beggars.—Fair lady, if thou wert once shrined in this bosom, I would buckler thee haratantara. [*He goes out by the well.*]

COR. Father, do you see this man? you little think he'll run a mile or two for such a cake, or

pass[1] for a pudding. I tell you, father, he has kept such a begging of me for a piece of this cake! Whoo! he comes upon me with "a superfantial substance, and the foison of the earth," that I know not what he means. If he came to me thus, and said, "My friend, Corebus," or so, why, I could spare him a piece with all my heart; but when he tells me how God hath enriched me above other fellows with a cake, why, he makes me blind and deaf at once. Yet, father, here is a piece of cake for you, as hard as the world goes. [*Gives cake.*]

EREST. Thanks, son, but list to me;
He shall be deaf when thou shalt not see.
Farewell, my son; things may so hit,
Thou mayst have wealth to mend thy wit.

COR. Farewell, father, farewell; for I must make haste after my two-hand sword that is gone before.

[*They go out severally,* Corebus *by well,* Erestus *by fireplace.* Madge *keeps on knitting.* Fantastic *composes himself for another nap and* Frolic *turns his attention again to his feet.*]

[*The back curtain is drawn aside by two fairies, who take their stand on either side the entrance to the cell.* Sacrapant, *the sorcerer, appears in his cell and there does magic. He is clad in the dark robes of sorcery and is in form majestic. In his hand he bears a wand and on his head he wears a wreath, the signs of his magic power. Without*

[1] Care for.

*these he is impotent and doomed to death. At his first word there are signs of intense fear in the three spectators, which die down as the incidents unfold.*]

SAC. The day is clear, the welkin bright and grey,
The lark is merry and records her notes;
Each thing rejoiceth underneath the sky,
But only I, whom heaven hath in hate,
Wretched and miserable Sacrapant.
In Thessaly was I born and brought up:
My mother Meroe hight, a famous witch,
And by her cunning I of her did learn
To change and alter shapes of mortal men.
There did I turn myself into a dragon,
And stole away the daughter to the king,
Fair Delia, the mistress of my heart;
And brought her hither to revive the man[1]
That seemeth young and pleasant to behold,
And yet is agéd, crookéd, weak, and numb.
Thus by enchanting spells I do deceive
Those that behold and look upon my face;
But well may I bid youthful years adieu.
See where she comes from whence my sorrows grow!

[Delia *enters by the well with a pot in her hand. She is drawn, it seems, by the magic in the wand of* Sacrapant *for she walks as one fixed in a dream, modestly and with a charming innocence.*]

[1] Sacrapant.

How now, fair Delia! where have you been?

DEL. At the foot of the rock for running water, and gathering roots for your dinner, sir.

SAC. Ah, Delia,
Fairer art thou than the running water,
Yet harder far than steel or adamant!

DEL. Will it please you to sit down, sir?

SAC. Ay, Delia, sit and ask me what thou wilt, thou shalt have it brought into thy lap.

DEL. Then, I pray you, sir, let me have the best meat from the King of England's table, and the best wine in all France, brought in by the veriest knave in all Spain.

SAC. Delia, I am glad to see you so pleasant: Well, sit thee down.—

[*There is without the sound of voices singing an incantation.* Sacrapant *with the magic in his wand directs the two fairies standing by his cell door to set the table and draws from his cell a fat and jolly friar in black to serve his meat. As the song ceases the fairies return to their places beside the curtain, and the* Friar *places the food upon the table.*]

Spread, table, spread,
Meat, drink, and bread.
Ever may I have
What I ever crave.
When I am spread,
Meat for my black cock,
And meat for my red.

[Sacrapant *and* Delia *seat themselves, the* Friar

*standing behind the chair of* Sacrapant.]

SAC. Here, Delia, will ye fall to?

DEL. Is this the best meat in England?

SAC. Yea.

DEL. What is it?

SAC. A chine of English beef, meat for a king and a king's followers.

DEL. Is this the best wine in France?

SAC. Yea.

DEL. What wine is it?

SAC. A cup of neat wine of Orleans, that never came near the brewers in England.

DEL. Is this the veriest knave in all Spain?

SAC. Yea.

DEL. What, is he a friar?

SAC. Yea, a friar indefinite, and a knave infinite.

DEL. Then, I pray ye, Sir Friar, tell me before you go, which is the most greediest Englishman?

FRI. The miserable and most covetous usurer.

SAC. Hold thee there, friar. [*The* Friar *goes into the cell.*] But, soft! [Sacrapant *arises.*] Who have we here? Delia, away, be gone! Delia, away! for beset are we.—[Delia *disappears in the cell. Fairies remove table and stools, close curtains and go out.*] But heaven or hell shall rescue her for me. [*From cell door. He then goes out.*]

[*The* two brothers *enter by the well, searching anxiously for* Delia.]

FIRST BRO. Brother, was not that Delia did

appear,
Or was it but her shadow that was here?

SECOND BRO. Sister, where art thou? Delia, come again!
He calls, that of thy absence doth complain.—
Call out, Calypha, so that she may hear,
And cry aloud, for Delia is near.

ECHO. Near.

FIRST BRO. Near! O, where? hast thou any tidings?

ECHO. Tidings.

SECOND BRO. Which way is Delia, then? or that, or this?

ECHO. This.

FIRST BRO. And may we safely come where Delia is?

ECHO. Yes.

SECOND BRO. Brother, remember you the white bear of England's wood?
"Start not aside for every danger,
Be not afeard of every stranger;
Things that seem are not the same."

FIRST BRO. Brother,
Why do we not, then, courageously enter?

SECOND BRO. Then, brother, draw thy sword and follow me.

[*It lightens and thunders as* Sacrapant *enters from the cell, the curtains of which fairies have drawn as before. The* Second Brother *falls down.* Fantastic *and* Frolic *attempt to run away.* Madge

*tries to hide.*]

FIRST BRO. What, brother, dost thou fall?

SAC. Ay, and thou too, Calypha.

[*The* First Brother *falls down.*]

*Adeste, daemones!*

[*Enter from cell* Two Furies *in red with awful countenances. And the three for whom the tale is played are crouching in the very fireplace, debased with terror.*]

Away with them:
Carry them straight to Sacrapanto's cell,
There in despair and torture for to dwell.

[Furies *go out with the* Two Brothers. *When the* Furies *disappear* Sacrapant *advances to the mound of earth and there speaks.*]

These are Thenores' sons of Thessaly,
That come to seek Delia their sister forth;
But, with a potion I to her have given,
My arts have made her to forget herself

[*Removes a turf, and shows a light in a glass. The three huddled ones grow more calm.*]

See here the thing which doth prolong my life,
With this enchantment I do anything;
And till this fade, my skill shall still endure;
And never none shall break this little glass,
But she that's neither wife, widow, nor maid:

[*He starts with relief across the stage where confronted by the cross the evil in him cowers before the symbol and he retreats unmanned into his cell.*]

Then cheer thyself; this is thy destiny,

Never to die but by a dead man's hand. [*He goes out; fairies close cell curtains as before.*]

[*Enter, fireplace,* Erestus *to the cross. Following him not too closely, comes* Eumenides the *exhausted lover of* Delia, *in clothing once fine but bedraggled by many wanderings.*]

EUM. Tell me, Time,
Tell me, just Time, when shall I Delia see?
When shall I see the loadstar of my life?
When shall my wandering course end with her sight,
Or I but view my hope, my heart's delight?

[*He sees* Erestus *at the cross.*]

Father, God speed! if you tell fortunes, I pray, good father, tell me mine.

EREST. Son, I do see in thy face
Thy blesséd fortune work apace:
I do perceive that thou hast wit;
Beg of thy fate to govern it,
For wisdom governed by advice,
Makes many fortunate and wise.
Bestow thy alms, give more than all,
Till dead men's bones come at thy call.
Farewell, my son: dream of no rest,
Till thou repent that thou didst best.

[*Goes out, well.*]

EUM. [*Sitting by the cross.*] This man hath left me in a labyrinth:
He biddeth me give more than all,
Till dead men's bones come at my call;

He biddeth me dream of no rest,
Till I repent that I do best. [*Leans against cross and sleeps.*]

[*Enter* Wiggen, Corebus, Churchwarden, *and* Sexton, *the first two bearing upon a bier a body covered with a black cloth, the* Churchwarden *with a staff in his hand, and the* Sexton *carrying a shovel.* Wiggin *and* Corebus *are slightly the worse for wear and as a result combative; the* Churchwarden *has the courage of his convictions, which are few and those not complex; the* Sexton *is a coward unless protected by the broad back and resolute shoulders of the* Churchwarden, *when he ventures some slight expostulatory gestures. On the whole they are a commonplace quartette of villagers engaged in a somewhat heated argument They advance front during the altercation, putting down the bier. Meanwhile* Madge *and her friends are composed again,* Madge *nearly asleep over her knitting. She quite goes off; but* Fantastic *and* Frolic *get interested in the quarrel and even investigate the bier* ]

Wig. You may be ashamed, you rascally scald Sexton and Churchwarden, if you had any shame in those shameless faces of yours, to let a poor man lie so long above ground unburied. A rot on you all, that have no more compassion of a good fellow when he is gone!

Church. What, would you have us to bury him and to answer it ourselves to the parish?

Sex. Parish me no parishes; pay me my fees,

and let the rest run on in the quarter's accounts, and put it down for one of your good deeds, o' God's name! for I am not one that curiously stands upon merits.

COR. You rascally, sodden-headed sheep's face, shall a good fellow do less service and more honesty to the parish, and will you not, when he is dead, let him have Christmas burial?

WIG. Peace, Corebus! as sure as Jack was Jack, the frolic'st franion amongst you, and I, Wiggen, his sweet sworn brother, Jack shall have his funerals, or some of them shall lie on God's dear earth for it, that's once.

CHURCH. Wiggen, I hope thou wilt do no more than thou darest answer.

WIG. Sir, sir, dare or dare not, more or less, answer or not answer,—do this, or have this.

SEX. Help, help, help!

[Wiggen *sets upon the* Churchwarden *with his fists.* Eumenides *awakes and comes to them.*]

EUM. Hold thy hands, good fellow.

COR. Can you blame him, sir, if he take Jack's part against this shake-rotten parish that will not bury Jack?

EUM. Why, what was that Jack?

COR. Who, Jack, sir? who, our Jack, sir? as good a fellow as ever trod upon neat's-leather.

WIG. Look you, sir; he gave fourscore and nineteen mourning gowns to the parish, when he died, and because he would not make them up a full hun-

dred, they would not bury him: was not this good dealing?

CHURCH. O Lord, sir, how he lies! he was not worth a halfpenny, and drunk out every penny; and now his fellows, his drunken companions, would have us to bury him at the charge of the parish. An we make many such matches, we may pull down the steeple, sell the bells, and thatch the chancel: he shall lie above ground till he dance a galliard about the churchyard, for Steeven Loach.

WIG. *Sic argumentaris, Domine* Loach,—An we make many such matches, we may pull down the steeple, sell the bells and thatch the chancel? In good time, sir, and hang yourselves in the bell-ropes, when you have done. *Domine, opponens praepono tibi hanc quaestionem,* whether will you have the ground broken or your pates broken first? for one of them shall be done presently, and to begin mine, I'll seal it upon your coxcomb.

EUM. Hold thy hands, I pray thee, good fellow; be not too hasty.

COR. You capon's face, we shall have you turned out of the parish one of these days, with never a tatter to your back; then you are in worse taking than Jack.

EUM. Faith, and he is bad enough. This fellow does but the part of a friend, to seek to bury his friend: how much will bury him?

WIG. Faith, about some fifteen or sixteen shillings will bestow him honestly.

SEX. Ay, even thereabouts, sir.

EUM. Here, hold it, then:—[*aside*] and I have left me but one poor three halfpence: now do I remember the words the old man spake at the cross, "Bestow all thou hast," and this is all, "till dead men's bones come at thy call";—here, hold it [*gives money*]; and so farewell.

WIG. God, and all good, be with you, sir! [Eumenides *goes out, well.*] Nay, you cormorants, I'll bestow one peal of[1] Jack at mine own proper costs and charges.

COR. You may thank God the long staff and the bilboblade crossed not your coxcombs.—Well, we'll to the churchstile and have a pot, and so trill-lill. [*Goes out with* Wiggen, *left front.*]

CHURCH. } Come, let's go. [*They go out left*
SEX. } *front carrying bier.*]

FAN. But, hark you, gammer [*nudging her*], methinks this Jack bore a great sway in the parish.

MADGE. [*Sleepily.*] O, this Jack was a marvellous fellow! he was but a poor man, but very well beloved: you shall see anon what this Jack will come to. [*Goes back to sleep.*]

[*The* Harvestmen *return from reaping, with the* Women, *as their song is sung outside.*]

FRO. Soft! who have we here? our amorous harvesters.

FAN. Ay, ay, let us sit still, and let them alone.

[*Singing without, as they dance.*]

[1] On.

Lo, here we come a-reaping, a-reaping,
To reap our harvest-fruit!
And thus we pass the year so long,
And never be we mute.

[*Enter, well,* Huanebango *abruptly, frightening them away.*]

HUAN. Fee, fa, fum,
Here is the Englishman,—
Conquer him that can,—
Come for his lady bright,
To prove himself a knight,
And win her love in fight.

FRO. Soft! who have we here?

MADGE. [*Awaking.*] O, this is a choleric gentleman! All you that love your lives, keep out of the smell of his two-hand sword: now goes he to the conjurer.

FAN. Methinks the conjurer should put the fool into a juggling-box.[1]

[*Enter* Corebus, *well.*]

COR. Who-haw, Master Bango, are you here? hear you, you had best sit down here, and beg an alms with me.

HUAN. Hence, base cullion! here is he that commandeth ingress and egress with his weapon, and will enter at his voluntary, whosoever saith no

VOICE. No

[*A flame of fire; and* Huanebango *falls down.*]

[1] Originally this speech and the two preceding it were before the first speech by Huanebango.

MADGE. [*Aroused.*] So with that they kissed and spoiled the edge of as good a two-hand sword as ever God put life in. Now goes Corebus in, spite of the conjurer. [*During this speech the fairies open cell curtains as before.*]

[*Enter* Sacrapant *followed by* Two Furies.]

SAC. Away with him into the open fields,
To be a ravening prey to crows and kites:

[Huan *is carried out by the* Two Furies.]

And for this villain, let him wander up and down,
In naught but darkness and eternal night.

[*Strikes* Corebus *blind.*]

COR. Here hast thou slain Huan, a slashing knight,
And robbéd poor Corebus of his sight.

SAC. Hence, villain, hence!

[Corebus *goes out, gropingly, at the right.*]

Now I have unto Delia given a potion of forgetfulness.

[*The three are now all asleep.*]

That, when she comes, she shall not know her brothers.
Lo, where they labour, like to country-slaves,
With spade and mattock, on this enchanted ground!
Now will I call her by another name;
For never shall she know herself again
Until that Sacrapant hath breathed his last.
See where she comes.

[*Enter, well,* Delia, *still passively controlled by the wand of* Sacrapant. *She goes into* Sacrapant's

*magic circle drawn upon the ground.*]
Come hither, Delia, take this goad; here hard
At hand two slaves do work and dig for gold:
Gore them with this, and thou shalt have enough.
[*Gives her a goad.*]

DEL. Good sir, I know not what you mean.

SAC. [*Aside.*] She hath forgotten to be Delia,
But not forgot the same she should forget;
But I will change her name.—
Fair Berecynthia, so this country calls you,
Go ply these strangers, wench; they dig for gold.
[*He goes out through cell.*]

DEL. O heavens, how
Am I beholding to this fair young man!
But I must ply these strangers to their work:
See where they come.

[*Enter, cell, the* Two Brothers, *in their shirts, with spades. They advance to plead with* Delia, *who drives them to work at the mound of earth.*]

FIRST BRO. O brother, see where Delia is!

SECOND BRO. O Delia,
Happy are we to see thee here!

DEL. What tell you me of Delia, prating swains?
I know no Delia, nor know I what you mean.
Ply you your work, or else you're like to smart.

FIRST BRO. Why, Delia, know'st thou not thy brothers here?
We come from Thessaly to seek thee forth;
And thou deceiv'st thyself, for thou art Delia.

DEL. Yet more of Delia? then take this, and

smart: [*Whips them.*]
What, feign you shifts for to defer your labour?
Work, villains, work; it is for gold you dig.

SECOND BRO. Peace, brother, peace: this vile enchanter
Hath ravished Delia of her senses clean,
And she forgets that she is Delia.

FIRST BRO. Leave, cruel thou, to hurt the miserable.—
Dig, brother, dig, for she is hard as steel.

[*Here they dig, and descry a light in a glass under a little hill.*]

SECOND BRO. Stay, brother; what hast thou descried?

DEL. Away, and touch it not; 'tis something that
My lord hath hidden there.

[*Covers the light again.*]

[*Re-enter* Sacrapant *from cell.*]

SAC. Well said! thou plyest these pioners well.—
Go get you in, you labouring slaves.

[*The* Two Brothers *go into the cell.*]

Come, Berecynthia, let us in likewise,
And hear the nightingale record her notes.

[*They go into the cell and fairies close the curtains.*]

[*Enter, right,* Zantippa *to the well of life with a pot in her hand.* Zantippa's *name belies neither herself nor the description her father has given her. She is fair and comely but has a "tongue with a*

*tang" and a disposition matching it.*]

ZAN. Now for a husband, house, and home: God send a good one or none, I pray God! My father hath sent me to the well for the water of life, and tells me, if I give fair words, I shall have a husband. But here comes Celanta, my sweet sister: I'll stand by and hear what she says. [*Retires.*]

[*Enter, right,* Celanta *to the well of life, with a pot in her hand. She is the opposite to her sister. Dark, ill-favored, almost homely in appearance, she has a disposition as gentle as an opening bud in May. There is no malice in her, though she thinks what she thinks about* Zantippa.]

CEL. My father hath sent me to the well for water, and he tells me, if I speak fair, I shall have a husband, and none of the worst. Well, though I am black, I am sure all the world will not forsake me; and, as the old proverb is, though I am black, I am not the devil.

ZAN. [*Coming forward.*] Marry-gup with a murren, I know wherefore thou speakest that: but go thy ways home as wise as thou camest, or I'll set thee home with a wanion.

[*Here she snatches away her sister's pitcher and rushes out, left.*]

CEL. I think this be the curstest quean in the world: you see what she is, a little fair, but as proud as the devil, and the veriest vixen that lives upon God's earth Well, I'll let her alone, and go home, and get another pitcher, and, for all this, get

me to the well for water. [*She goes out, right.*]

[*Enter, out of* Sacrapant's *cell, the* Two Furies, *carrying* Huanebango: *they lay him by the Well of Life, and then go out. Re-enter* Zantippa *with a pitcher to the well.*]

ZAN. Once again for a husband; and, in faith, Celanta I have got the start of you; belike husbands grow by the well-side. Now my father says I must rule my tongue: why, alas, what am I, then? A woman without a tongue is as a soldier without his weapon: but I'll have my water, and be gone.

[*Here she offers to dip her pitcher in, and a* Head *rises in the well.*]

[*Singing without.*] Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear you make the golden beard to weep,
Fair maiden, white and red,
Stroke me smooth, and comb my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell-bread.

ZAN. What is this?

"Fair maiden, white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell-bread?"
"Cockell" callest thou it, boy? faith, I'll give you cockell-bread.

[*She threatens to break her pitcher upon the* Head: *then it thunders and lightens; and* Huanebango, *who is deaf and cannot hear, rises up.* Huan *woos as he does everything else, not intelligently, but violently. Yet* Zantippa *both matches and captures him.*]

HUAN. Philida, phileridos, pamphilida, florida, flortos:
Dub dub-a-dub, bounce, quoth the guns, with a sulphurous huff-snuff:
Waked with a wench, pretty peat, pretty love and my sweet pretty pigsnie,
Just by thy side shall sit surnamed great Huanebango:
Safe in my arms will I keep thee, threat Mars, or thunder Olympus.

[*His outburst awakens the three, who exhibit great interest.*]

ZAN. [*Aside.*] Foh, what greasy groom have we here? He looks as though he crept out of the backside of the well, and speaks like a drum perished at the west end.

HUAN. O, that I might,—but I may not, woe to my destiny therefore—
Kiss that I clasp! but I cannot: tell me, my destiny, wherefore?

ZAN. [*Aside.*] Whoop, now I have my dream. Did you never hear so great a wonder as this, three blue beans in a blue bladder, rattle, bladder, rattle?

HUAN. [*Aside.*] I'll now set my countenance, and to her in prose; it may be, this rim-ram-ruff is too rude an encounter.—Let me, fair lady, if you be at leisure, revel with your sweetness, and rail upon that cowardly conjurer, that hath cast me, or congealed me rather, into an unkind sleep, and polluted my carcass.

ZAN. [*Aside.*] Laugh, laugh, Zantippa; thou hast thy fortune, a fool and a husband under one.

HUAN. Truly, sweetheart, as I seem, about some twenty years, the very April of mine age.

ZAN. [*Aside.*] Why, what a prating ass is this!

HUAN. Her coral lips, her crimson chin,
Her silver teeth so white within,
Her golden locks, her rolling eye,
Her pretty parts, let them go by,
Heigh-ho, have wounded me,
That I must die this day to see!

ZAN. By Gogs-bones, thou art a flouting knave: "her coral lips, her crimson chin!" ka, wilshaw!

HUAN. True, my own, and my own because mine, and mine because mine, ha, ha!—Above a thousand pounds in possibility, and things fitting thy desire in possession.

ZAN. [*Aside.*] The sot thinks I ask of his lands. Lob be your comfort. . . . Hear you, sir; an if you will have us, you had best say so betime.

HUAN. True, sweetheart, and will royalize thy progeny with my pedigree.

[*They go out, fireplace.* Zantippa *the Shrew and* Huanebango *the Boaster go the primrose path of dalliance out of the tale into Fairyland.*]

[*Enter, left,* Corebus, *who is blind, and* Celanta, *to the Well of Life for water.*][1]

COR. Come, my duck, come: I have now got a

[1] This episode in the original follows the one it here precedes.

wife: thou art fair, art thou not?

CEL. My Corebus, the fairest alive; make no doubt of that.

COR. Come, wench, are we almost at the well?

CEL. Ay, Corebus, we are almost at the well now
I'll go fetch some water: sit down while I dip my pitcher in.

[*A* Head *comes up with ears of corn, which she combs into her lap* ]

[*Singing without.*] Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear you make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maiden, white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell-bread

[*A* Second Head *comes up full of gold, which she combs into her lap.*]

[*Singing without.*] Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear thou make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maid, white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And every hair a sheaf shall be,
And every sheaf a golden tree.

CEL. O, see, Corebus, I have combed a great deal of gold into my lap, and a great deal of corn!

COR. Well said, wench! [*He feels in her lap.*] Now we shall have just enough: God send us coiners to coin our gold. But come, shall we go home, sweetheart?

CEL. Nay, come, Corebus, I will lead you.

COR. So, Corebus, things have well hit;
Thou hast gotten wealth to mend thy wit.

[*They go out, fireplace.*]

[*Enter, well,* Eumenides, *even more hopeless than before. He seats himself, despondent, at the cross. The three go gradually off to sleep for the rest of the play.*]

EUM. Wretched Eumenides, still unfortunate,
Envied by fortune and forlorn by fate,
Here pine and die, wretched Eumenides,
Die in the spring, the April of thy age!
Here sit thee down, repent what thou hast done:
I would to God that it were ne'er begun!

[*Enter, fireplace,* Ghost of Jack, *following* Eumenides. *The shadow of a sprightly young fellow full of attitudes and the play of wit and fancy in many poses. This is no somber and mysterious ghost, except when bent upon undoing evil. Even then he goes about his business somewhat more cheerfully than do many.*]

G. OF JACK. You are well overtaken, sir.

EUM. Who's that?

G. OF JACK. You are heartily well met, sir.

EUM. Forbear, I say; who is that which pincheth me?

G. OF JACK. Trusting in God, good Master Eumenides, that you are in so good health as all your friends were at the making hereof,—God give you good morrow, sir! Lack you not a neat, handsome, and cleanly young lad, about the age of fifteen

or sixteen years, that can run by your horse, and, for a need, make your mastership's shoes as black as ink? How say you, sir?

EUM. Alas, pretty lad, I know not how to keep myself, and much less a servant, my pretty boy; my state is so bad.

G. OF JACK. Content yourself, you shall not be so ill a master but I'll be as bad a servant. Tut, sir, I know you, though you know not me: are not you the man, sir, deny it if you can, sir, that came from a strange place in the land of Catita, where Jack-an-apes flies with his tail in his mouth, to seek out a lady as white as snow and as red as blood? Ha, ha! have I touched you now?

EUM. [*Aside.*] I think this boy be a spirit.—How knowest thou all this?

G. OF JACK. Tut, are not you the man, sir, deny it if you can, sir, that gave all the money you had to the burying of a poor man, and but one three halfpence left in your purse? Content you, sir. I'll serve you, that is flat.

EUM. Well, my lad, since thou are so importunate, I am content to entertain thee, not as a servant, but a co-partner in my journey. But whither shall we go? for I have not any money more than one bare three halfpence.

G. OF JACK. Well, master, content yourself, for if my divination be not out, that shall be spent at the next inn or alehouse we come to; for, master, I know you are passing hungry: therefore I'll go

before and provide dinner until that you come; no doubt but you'll come fair and softly after.

EUM. Ay, go before: I'll follow thee. [*Hopelessly.*]

G. OF JACK. But do you hear, master? do you know my name?

EUM. No, I promise thee; not yet.

G. OF JACK. Why, I am Jack. [*He goes out, behind settle.*]

EUM. Jack! why, be it so, then. [*Still he fails to recognize this ghost.*]

[Fairies *bring in table and stool, taking position at front curtains. Enter* Hostess, *a trim and smiling woman, and Jack setting meat on the table.* Eumenides *walks up and down and will eat no meat.*]

HOST. How say you, sir? do you please to sit down?

EUM. Hostess, I thank you, I have no great stomach. [*Seats himself.*]

HOST. Pray, sir, what is the reason your master is so strange? doth not this meat please him?

G. OF JACK. Yes, hostess, but it is my master's fashion to pay before he eats; therefore, a reckoning, good hostess.

HOST. Marry, shall you, sir, presently. [*She goes out, behind settle.*]

EUM. Why, Jack, what dost thou mean? thou knowest I have not any money; therefore, sweet Jack, tell me what shall I do?

G. OF JACK. Well, master, look in your purse.

EUM. Why, faith, it is a folly, for I have no money.

G. OF JACK. Why, look you, master; do so much for me.

EUM. [*Looking into his purse.*] Alas, Jack, my purse is full of money!

G. OF JACK. "Alas," master! does that word belong to this accident? why, methinks I should have seen you cast away your cloak and in a bravado dance a galliard round about the chamber: why, master, your man can teach you more wit than this.

[*He calls the* Hostess.]

Come, Hostess, cheer up my master

HOST. [*Entering.*] You are heartily welcome; and if it please you to eat of a fat capon, a fairer bird, a finer bird, a sweeter bird, a crisper bird, a neater bird, your worship never eat of

EUM. Thanks, my fine, eloquent Hostess.

G. OF JACK. But hear you, master, one word by the way: are you content I shall be halves in all you get in your journey?

EUM. [*Rising.*] I am, Jack, here is my hand.

G. OF JACK. Enough, master, I ask no more.

EUM. Come, Hostess, receive your money; and I thank you for my good entertainment. [*Gives money.*]

HOST. You are heartily welcome, sir.

EUM. Come, Jack, whither go we now?

G OF JACK. Marry, master, to the conjurer's presently.

EUM. Content, Jack —Hostess, farewell.

[*Hostess goes out behind settle.*]

G. OF JACK. Come away, master, come.

[*They start toward the cross.* Fairies *go out behind settle, with table and stool.*]

EUM. Go along, Jack, I'll follow thee. Jack, they say it is good to go cross-legged, and say prayers backward; how sayest thou?

G. OF JACK. Tut, never fear, master, let me alone. Here sit you still; speak not a word; and because you shall not be enticed with his enchanting speeches, with this same wool I'll stop your ears. [*Puts wool into the ears of* Eumenides.] And so, master, sit still, for I must to the conjurer.

[*He goes out through closed curtains of cell unseen of* Sacrapant *who instantly appears between the undrawn curtains and is as instantly followed by the* Ghost of Jack *invisible to the sorcerer.*]

SAC. How now! what man art thou, that sits so sad?
Why dost thou gaze upon these stately trees
Without the leave and will of Sacrapant?
What, not a word but mum? Then, Sacrapant,
Thou art betrayed.

[*The* Ghost of Jack *takes* Sacrapant's *wreath off from his head and wearing it himself runs about the stage.* Sacrapant *looks about in dread but sees him not.*]

What hand invades the head of Sacrapant?
What hateful Fury doth envy my happy state?

Then, Sacrapant, these are thy latest days.

[*The* Ghost *comes flitting back and twists from* Sacrapant's *nerveless fingers his magic wand, holding it as* Sacrapant *was used to do until the sorcerer has disappeared.*]

Alas, my veins are numbed, my sinews shrink,
My blood is pierced, my breath fleeting away,
And now my timeless date is come to end!
He in whose life his acts have been so foul,
Now in his death to hell descends his soul.

[*He goes out through closed curtains of cell.*]

G. OF JACK. O, sir, are you gone? Now I hope we shall have some other coil. Now master, how like you this? the conjurer he is dead, and vows never to trouble us more. Now get you to your fair lady, and see what you can do with her.—Alas, he heareth me not all this while! but I will help that.

[*Pulls the wool out of the ears of* Eumenides.]

EUM. How now, Jack! what news?

G. OF JACK. Here, master, take this sword [*Shows* Eumenides *his own sword, and leads him to the mound*], and dig with it at the foot of this hill.

[Eumenides *digs, and spies a light in a glass.*]

EUM. How now, Jack! what is this?

G. OF JACK. Master, without this the conjurer could do nothing; and so long as this light lasts, so long doth his art endure, and this being out, then doth his art decay.

EUM. Why, then, Jack, I will soon put out this light.

G. OF JACK. Ay, master, how?

EUM. Why, with a stone I'll break the glass, and then blow it out.

G. OF JACK. No, master, you may as soon break the smith's anvil as this little vial; nor the biggest blast that ever Boreas blew cannot blow out this little light; but she that is neither maid, wife, nor widow. Master, wind this horn, and see what will happen. [*Gives horn.*]

[*As* Eumenides *winds the horn,* Jack *does the magic of* Sacrapant *with his wand. Enter* Venelia, *who breaks the glass, blows out the light and then goes out.*]

So, master, how like you this? This is she that ran madding in the woods, his betrothed love that keeps the cross; and now, this light being out, all are restored to their former liberty: and now, master, to the lady that you have so long looked for.

[*The* Ghost of Jack *draws the cell curtain, and discovers* Delia *sitting asleep.* Eumenides *kisses her thrice.*]

EUM. [*Kneeling.*] God speed, fair maid, sitting alone,—there is once; God speed, fair maid,—there is twice; God speed, fair maid,—that is thrice.

DEL. [*Awaking.*] Not so, good sir, for you are by.

G. OF JACK. Enough, master, she hath spoke; now I will leave her with you. [*He goes out, cell.*]

EUM. [*Arising.*] Thou fairest flower of these western parts,
Whose beauty so reflecteth in my sight
As doth a crystal mirror in the sun;
For thy sweet sake I have crossed the frozen Rhine;
Leaving fair Po, I sailed up Danuby,
As far as Saba, whose enhancing streams
Cut twixt the Tartars and the Russians:
These have I crossed for thee, fair Delia:
Then grant me that which I have sued for long.

DEL. [*Arising.*] Thou gentle knight, whose fortune is so good
To find me out and set my brothers free,
My faith, my heart, my hand I give to thee. [*Both advance.*]

EUM. Thanks, gentle madam: but here comes Jack; thank him, for he is the best friend that we have.

[*Re-enter the* Ghost of Jack, *with* Sacrapant's *head in his hand.*]

How now, Jack! what hast thou there?

G OF JACK. Marry, master, the head of the conjurer.

EUM. Why, Jack, that is impossible; he was a young man.

G. OF JACK. Ah, master, so he deceived them that beheld him! but he was a miserable, old, and crooked man, though to each man's eye he seemed young and fresh; for, master, this conjurer took the shape of the old man that kept the cross, and that old man

was in the likeness of the conjurer. But now, master, wind your horn.

[Eumenides *winds his horn. Enter, fireplace,* Venelia, *the* Two Brothers, *and* Erestus.]

EUM. Welcome, Erestus! welcome, fair Venelia!
Welcome, Thelea and Calypha both!
Now have I her that I so long have sought,
So saith fair Delia, if we have your consent.

FIRST BRO. Valiant Eumenides, thou well deserv'st
To have our favours; so let us rejoice
That by thy means we are at liberty:
Here may we joy each in the other's sight,
And this fair lady have her wandering knight.

G. OF JACK. So, master, now ye think you have done; but I must have a saying to you: you know you and I were partners, I to have half in all you got.

EUM. Why, so thou shalt, Jack.

G. OF JACK. Why, then, master, draw your sword, part your lady, let me have half of her presently.

EUM. Why, I hope, Jack, thou dost but jest: I promised thee half I got, but not half my lady.

G. OF JACK. But what else, master? have you not gotten her? therefore divide her straight, for I will have half; there is no remedy.

EUM. Well, ere I will falsify my word unto my friend, take her all: here, Jack, I'll give her thee.

G. OF JACK. Nay, neither more nor less, mas-

ter, but even just half.

EUM. Before I will falsify my faith unto my friend, I will divide her: Jack, thou shalt have half.

FIRST BRO. Be not so cruel unto our sister, gentle knight

SECOND BRO. O, spare fair Delia! she deserves no death.

EUM. Content yourselves; my word is passed to him.—Therefore prepare thyself, Delia, for thou must die.

DEL. Then farewell, world! adieu, Eumenides!

[Eumenides *offers to strike, and the* Ghost of Jack *stays him.*]

G. OF JACK. Stay, master; it is sufficient I have tried your constancy. Do you now remember since you paid for the burying of a poor fellow?

EUM. Ay, very well, Jack

G. OF JACK. Then, master, thank that good deed for this good turn [I go to my grave]: and so God be with you all! [*Disappears behind cell curtain.*]

EUM. Jack, what, art thou gone? then farewell, Jack!—

Come, brothers, and my beauteous Delia,
Erestus, and thy dear Venelia,
We will to Thessaly with joyful hearts.

ALL. Agreed: we follow thee and Delia.

[*They all go out, except* Frolic, Fantastic, *and* Madge.]

FAN. What, gammer, asleep?

MADGE. By the mass, son, 'tis almost day; and

my windows shut at the cock's-crow.

FRO. Do you hear, gammer? methinks this Jack bore a great sway amongst them.

MADGE. O, man, this was the ghost of the poor man that they kept such a coil to bury; and that makes him to help the wandering knight so much. But come, let us in: we will have a cup of ale and a toast this morning, and so depart.

[*Enter* Clunch *and* Antic, *returning after their night's sleep. They take their places to watch the closing fairy dance.*]

FAN. Then you have made an end of your tale, gammer?

MADGE. Yes, faith: when this was done, I took a piece of bread and cheese, and came my way; and so shall you have, too, before you go, to your breakfast. [*They go out.*]

[*Song without,* Charm me asleep *and* Fairy dance. *This time they vanish by the fireplace and the well as* Epilogue *enters, right, in severe scholastic garb. They close the curtains behind them and* Epilogue, *left along upon the stage, repeats the following.*]

[Now, gentles all, it is the early dawn
When fairies leave the midnight fields and sports
Tempered to mortal minds, and wind their way
Home to the distant hills of Fairyland.
I come a mortal breaking on their spell
To ask your graces' favor. Did we well
To bring you back this wandering Old Wives' Tale,
Or did we ill? However that may be,

We hope the Old Wife brought a pleasant hour.
If not, may hours of happiness to come
Atone for one of sadness. So, farewell!]

[*He goes out.*]

# APPENDICES

## I

### SKETCH OF PEELE'S LIFE

George Peele was one of the group of University wits (John Lyly, Thomas Lodge, George Peele, Robert Greene, and Thomas Nashe) who exerted so potent an influence upon Elizabethan drama just prior to Shakespeare. He was born in 1558. His early education was obtained at the Grammar School connected with Christ's Hospital, of which his father, James Peele, was clerk. Peele was an Oxford man, student at Pembroke and Christ Church, receiving his B.A. in 1577, his M.A. in 1579. While a member of the University he had already made so striking a reputation as poet, scholar, and dramatist, that in 1583, after a three years' residence in London, he was called back to Oxford to assist in the preparation of a dramatic entertainment for the reception at his college of the Polish prince palatine, Albertus Alasco. His life leaves nothing to boast of apart from his writings. A good marriage, financially at least, was of no assistance to him, as the property soon vanished. He was dissolute, living a miserable existence in squalor and depravity. He died in 1598,

barely forty years old. The extant plays credited to him are *The Arraignment of Paris, The Old Wives' Tale, Edward I, The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe,* and *The Battle of Alcazar.* In contrast to the sordidness and failure of his life stands the dramatic output of the man and the literary ideals which inspired him. Professor Gummere, writing in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies,* says of him: "He was an artist in words, and he had the gift of humor." And Professor George P. Baker's comment in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* elaborates this thought when he says that Peele had "an exquisite feeling for the musical value of words," and further remarks that in some of his lines is revealed "something of that peculiar ability which reached its full development in the mature Shakespeare—that power of flashing before us in a line or two something definitive both as a picture and in beauty of phrase."

## II

### THE FAIRY STORIES IN "THE OLD WIVES' TALE"

In constructing his play Peele made use of four principal tales, *Childe Roland, The Sleeping Beauty, Jack, the Giant Killer,* and *The Three Heads of the Well.* In addition, he inserted details common to many folk-tales and of use in increasing the impression which he desired to make. He seems to have

felt that the audience must be returned to their childhood by as many paths as possible. The *Childe Roland* story is that of the chief quest of the two brothers. In it, as here told, *Erestus* takes the place of Merlin. The sleeping beauty story is that of the quest of *Eumenides*. With it is bound up that of *Jack, the Giant Killer,* who assists *Eumenides* by slaying *Sacrapant*. The daughters of *Lampriscus* are the heroines of Peele's version of *The Three Heads of the Well*. Some of the subordinate themes are that of the *Life Index* in the light whose extinction meant *Sacrapant's* death; the *Thankful Dead*, as a motive for *Jack's* aid to *Eumenides;* and the *Fee-fo-fum* refrain so often spoken by giants and ogres in the old tales.

Mr. Joseph Jacobs, in his *English Fairy Stories,* has traced some of these connections. His notes are worth quoting, not only for the information given about the fairy tales in which we are interested, but because of his antiquarian estimate of the play, which is so like that of many critics who are without his knowledge. In his notes upon *Childe Roland* occurs the following sentence: "That some such story was current in England in Shakespeare's time is proved by that curious *mélange* of nursery tales, Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*." In his notes upon *Jack, the Giant Killer,* he refers to that "Curious play of Peele's, *The Old Wives' Tale,* in which one of the characters is the ghost of *Jack*." As Professor Gummere remarks, there is an abundant field for scholarly

## III

### THE MUSIC USED IN THE MIDDLEBURY PRODUCTION

It may be of value to state in the briefest fashion the adaptations made use of in presenting the music of the play. Mrs. Maude S. Howard, now of the music department of Lincoln Memorial University, who had charge of the music, has kindly furnished the following statement:

1. *The Fairy Ring* and *Whenas the Rye.*

   Adapted to a Glee written by John Parry, "Come, Fairies, Trip It On the Grass." The recurring phrase, "With a ho, ho, ho, ho," added to both songs.

2. *Mad Maid's Song.*

   Adapted to a Ballet for five voices, "All Ye Woods and Trees and Bowers," written by Henry Lahee. The first movement only used and sung in unison.

3. *All Ye That Lovely Lovers Be.*

   Adapted to the Chorus of "The Chough and Crow to Roost Are Gone," written

by Sir Henry R. Bishop. The words of the chorus of original song added to the verse of "All ye," etc. Sung in three parts.

4. *Spread, Table, Spread.*

Adapted to second movement of "All Ye Woods and Trees and Flowers," by Mr. Lahee. Sung in thirds and sixths.

5. *Gently Dip, But Not Too Deep.*

Adapted to the first five phrases of "The Chough and Crow to Roost Have Gone," by Sir Henry Bishop. Sung in three parts.

6. *Charm Me Asleep.*

Music written by Maude Stevens Howard and patterned after an old madrigal in two parts.

All songs were accompanied by two clarinets and one flute, the air being played by one clarinet and flute, the second part played by the second clarinet. In the three songs the flute played the air and the two clarinets played the second and third parts.

## IV

### THE MAD MAID'S SONG, BY ROBERT HERRICK

Good morrow to the day so fair;
  Good morning, sir, to you;
Good morrow to mine own torn hair
  Bedabbled with the dew.

Good morning to this primrose, too;
  Good morrow to each maid
That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
  Wherein my love is laid.

Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me,
  Alack and welladay!
For pity, Sir, find out that bee
  Which bore my love away.

I'll seek him in your bonnet brave,
  I'll seek him in your eyes;
Nay, now I think t'have made his grave
  I' th' bed of strawberries.

I'll seek him there; I know, ere this,
  The cold, cold earth doth shake him;
But I will go, or send a kiss
  By you, Sir, to awake him.

Pray hurt him not; though he be dead,
He knows well who do love him,
And who with green turfs reare his head,
And who do rudely move him.

He's soft and tender! pray take heed!
With bands of cowslips bind him,
And bring him home:—but 'tis decreed
That I shall never find him.

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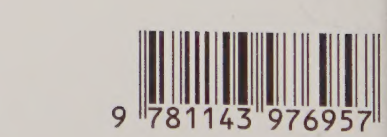

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